

COUNTRY & TOWN HOUSE

THE BEST OF
BOTH WORLDS

JULY 2018 £3.90

Poldark Passion

*Ellise Chappell
is riding high*

Celebrity Island

Fifty years on
and Mustique is
still hot, hot, hot

MR FIXIT

Meet the man
who solves
the problems
of UHNWIs

MADE IN NORFOLK

*The British
brands at home
on the coast*

ON WATCH

SIMON DE BURTON'S TIMELY SPECIAL



PLUS

WHY BUYERS
ARE COMING
BACK TO CHELSEA



RENTALS

HOUSE PARTY

A hotel is great, but when you've got family or friends in tow, a fabulous rental is sometimes the only way to go... Edited by **Daisy Finer**

IL POGGIO *Sicily, Italy*

Just 45 minutes from Palermo, perched 700m above sea-level, which means a welcome coolness come evening, sits this very private, pretty four-bedroom villa in glorious gardens with a killer pool (much larger than you'll find in most rentals), and views for miles around. SoloSicily manages everything with conscientious attention from the moment you book and its charming owner, Francesco, is on hand as your Sicilian guide-cum-problem solver (directing you to Enza at Scala bakery and her hot-from-the-oven bread; sending you off for the freshest of fish suppers at I Piscaturi, just in front of Porticello's fishermen's landing dock; hell, the guy will even cook the truly tastiest Sicilian dishes for you at home should you wish). The icing on the proverbial cake though is that you're well-located for some of this cultural melting pot's wonders, including the gobsmackingly beautiful Norman cathedral in Monreale with its enormous triple apse and mosaics inside made from, so they say, 2,200kg of pure gold. Join la passeggiata when the square comes alive with children and families in evening best; find a spot for an Aperol spritz and watch a semi-bygone world go by. Don't make the fundamental mistake of loading up the fridge with food from the supermarket; you won't find more pleasure than browsing Palermo's street markets, rich and abundant with everything you could possibly need: glossy black aubergines; Datterini tomatoes so sweet they taste like cherries; fish stalls groaning with sardines, tuna, octopus, squid; fresh and dried herbs; oils; pastas – do all your shopping here. There are many such markets



but if you happen upon Il Capo, seek out the discreet entrance to Chiesa dell'Immacolata Concezione, a Baroque marvel full of artworks that makes a startling contrast to the hustle and bustle of the market. Further afield, a day trip to Cefalù, to the east of the city, brings you to cobbled streets, another fantastic Norman cathedral (how did they build them?) and a sandy beach with a gentle clear sea. Perfection.

BOOK IT: From €1,950 per week (sleeps six). solosicily.com



VILLA EZZAHRA *Marrakech, Morocco*

The scent of orange blossom and the cool shade of date palms and citrus trees make Villa Ezzahra feel like the desert oasis it once was. The district of Palmeraie has slowly been incorporated into the expanding city of Marrakech, its wide boulevards and secluded villas now recognised as the city's most upmarket suburb. It was here in 2003 that British hotelier Brian Callaghan built Villa Ezzahra in the style of a traditional riad. Two more villas, Azzaytouna and Alkhosama were added over the years and the whole property now sleeps 26. A central courtyard affords maximum shade, the evenings illuminated with candles and in each bedroom a real fire will be burning at bedtime.

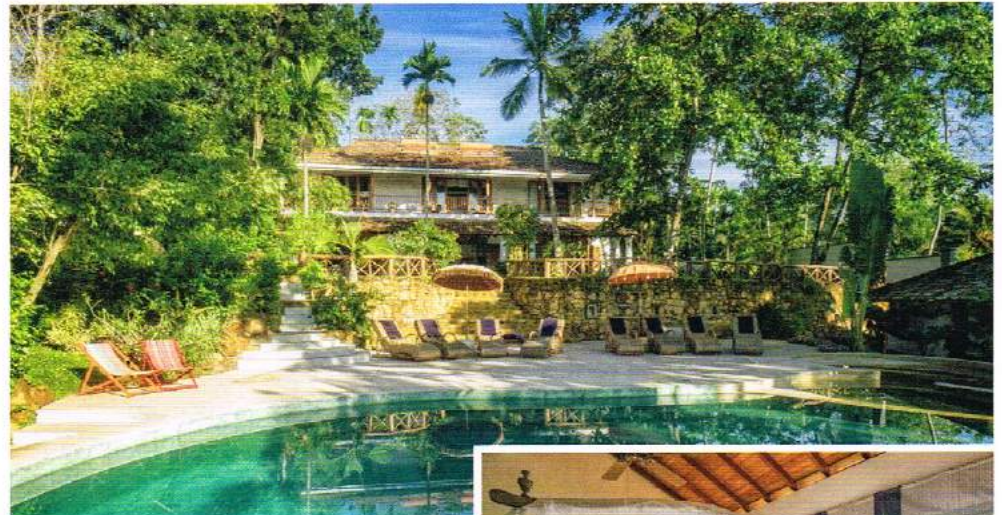
The pool is fed from a local spring and is blissfully chlorine-free, with a gym, film room, games room and Padel tennis court. And then there's the hammam. Steam baths and beauty treatments are all included, although some of the scrubs and massages are not for the faint of heart. The staff will organise expeditions to Djemaa el Fna and the souk in the old city, the Yves Saint Laurent museum, or day trips walking in the Atlas mountains just an hour or so drive away.

BOOK IT: From £17,400 for three nights (sleeps 14), including all meals, non-alcoholic drinks, massage and beauty treatments, airport transfer and a seven-seater vehicle with chauffeur daily from 10am to 8pm. ezzahra-morocco.com



MEDA GEDARA *Sri Lanka*

Water babies (both adult and children), take note, this magnificent, seven-bedroom villa nestled next to a secluded beach with miles of golden sand, has its own shriek-inducing 74ft jungle waterslide. Sleeping 18 guests with a mixture of accommodation from bunk rooms to vast suites, the owner, interior designer Fiona McLeod, has created a deeply comfortable and cool colonial-style hideaway (think dark wood, white walls, oriental rugs and pretty tiles), filled with original artwork, antique treasures and all 21st-century mod cons, including a cinema room (just in case it rains). Dense, tropical greenery gives way to bountiful gardens large enough for a family game of cricket or rounders – there's even an umpire's hut where staff can serve up traditional afternoon tea. For yoga bunnies, there's an outdoor, ocean-facing yoga sala for your daily downward dogs (you can book a teacher to come in or even sign up for a dedicated yoga retreat run by Om Ceylon). Or, of course, you may just prefer to hide away with a book in a hammock. Meanwhile, chef Roshan is on hand for all your culinary needs, whipping up anything from spice-infused fragrant curries to herb-baked catch of the day



with colourful, vitamin-packed salads. Naturally, there's a dedicated vegan (think turmeric-roasted cauliflower or spinach, sweet potato, chick pea curry) and kids' menu (lasagne, sausage and mash type thing), so every foodie whim is catered for. If you want to tear yourself away from this slice of paradise, grab a tuk tuk and head to some of the south coast's best beaches (Hiriketiya Bay is great for a surf lesson followed by a slice of pizza and beer, for example) and five minutes away is a proper ayurvedic spa. All in all, it's a total gem.

BOOK IT: From £750 per night (can be booked as five or seven bedrooms).

medagedara.com

